

Sky Awe

Sacred Skies

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The sky and Awe

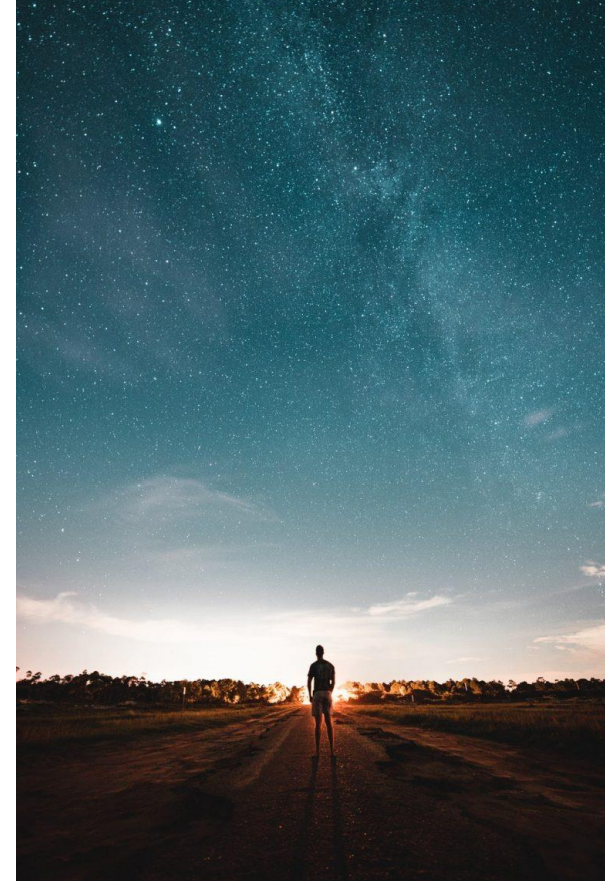
‘Awe is a feeling of wonder experienced by the self when facing something vaster, greater, beyond current understanding.’

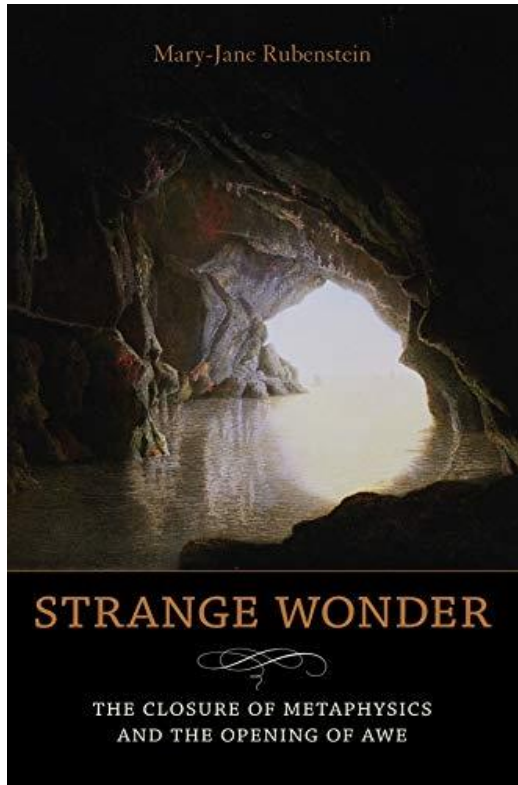
Keltner, D., & Haidt, J. (2003). Approaching awe, a moral, spiritual, and aesthetic emotion. *Cognition and Emotion*, 17, 297–314.

Awe is a side of sacredness – it is the sky’s ability to create awe that contributes to its sacredness.

‘Awe as a positive or even fearful emotion awe facilitates (increases or activates) religious and spiritual people’s propensity for spiritual behaviors and feelings of closeness with others.’

van Cappellen, P. S., Vassilis (2012). 'Awe Activates Religious and Spiritual Feelings and Behavioral Intentions', *Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, 4(3), pp. 223-236.





Rubenstein, M.-J. (2009).
*Strange wonder : the
closure of metaphysics
and the opening of awe.*
New York: Columbia
University Press.

Rubenstein compares shock with awe

‘Shock reveals the inessentiality of things: awe reveals the thingliness of inessentiality. ... Shock punctuates; awe enchains p.128

Rubenstein uses the term *thaumazein*, the Greek term for wonder. She repeats a well known saying, from Plato, that all philosophy begins with *thaumazein* (wonder).

Wonder can collapse into curiosity which leads to philosophy and the sciences but Rubenstein comments that awe can resist falling into the never ending pit of curiosity. P.39

Awe, when experienced, does not lead to questions but while held by awe we experience sacredness. This of course is the argument of Eliade in his work *Sacred and Profane*.

Sky Awe as omens

“When beggars die, there are no comets seen,
The Heavens themselves blaze forth the death
of Princes.”

(William Shakespeare *Julius Caesar*) (2.2.29–31)

Herman Hunger translates a letter from the Babylonian priest Asaredu the Younger written around 671 BCE – Asaredu was referring to meaning of a comet becoming visible at the time when Jupiter was making its last appearance in the night sky, he wrote:

[If] a comet [becomes visible in the path of the stars of] Anu: [fall of] Elam. Its people [.....] will be confused [.....] city with city [.....] brother will kill brother [.....] the king of Elam [.....] his days are near (to their end).

Herman Hunger Page 194



Sky Awe as Cosmogenic – culture making

The god Lugh and a comet. Lugh, (whose name means light) in Welsh mythology is known as Llew, the father of the children of Lir, and in English as King Lear.

Lugh, in the early version of the mythology is described as being as bright as the sun, but not the sun. This theme of being the sun, but not the sun is also expressed in a question, in the early myths, put to a Druid priest by the Irish warrior, Bress who stated:

‘It would seem wonderful to me, that the sun should rise in the west today and in the east every other day, said Bress to his Druids. “It would be better for us if it were so” replied the Druids, “It is the radiance of Lugh of the Long Arm”. ‘



March 2, 2013 comet, Pan-STARRS, seen from Queenstown, New Zealand.

Squire, C. (1912). *Celtic Myth and Legend: poetry and romance*. The Gresham Publishing Company, London. p.111



The Miracle of the Sun

The Miracle of the Sun

13 October 1917 - Cova da Iria, Portugal location of the Fatima shrine.

The rain had ceased, the clouds parted, and the sun shone forth, but not in its usual brilliance. Instead, it appeared like a silver disc, pale as the moon, at which all could gaze without straining their eyes.

Suddenly, impelled by some mysterious force, the disc began to whirl in the sky, casting off great shafts of multi-coloured light. Red, green, blue, yellow, violet the enormous rays shot across the sky at all angles, lighting up the entire countryside for many miles around, but particularly the upturned faces of those 70,000 spellbound people.

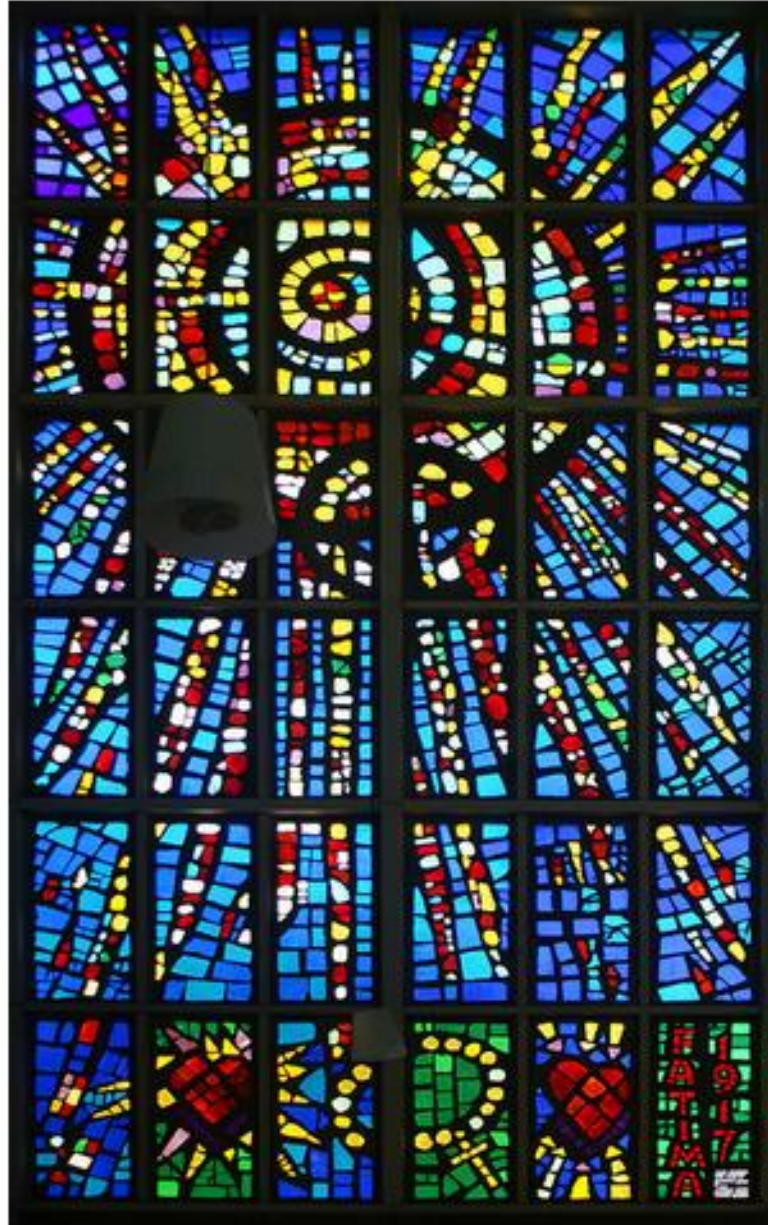
.....seemed that the whole world was on fire, ...Then a gasp of terror rose from the crowd, for the sun seemed to tear itself from the heavens and come crashing down upon the horrified multitude...

Just when it seemed that the ball of fire would fall upon and destroy them, the miracle ceased, and the sun resumed its normal place in the sky, shining forth as peacefully as ever. When the people arose from the ground, their clothes, which had been soaking wet and muddy, now were clean and dry. Many of the sick and crippled had been cured of their afflictions.



Dalle De Verre stained glass windows (Monks Of Buckfast Abbey) in Our Lady of Fatima, Harlow. This panel shows the Miracle Of The Sun the occurred when the BVM appeared at Fatima in 1917.

The shapes in the 3rd and 6th rows down are lights.



Part of the near about 100,000 people at Cova da Iria that witnessed the event known as "The Miracle of the Sun" occurred on October 13, 1917. Wikimedia Commons

The Miracle of the Sun



A parhelion in rainbow colours.

Sundogs – Fargo 18 Feb, 2009
photos Wikicommons.

A **sun dog** or **sundog**, scientific name **parhelion** (plural **parhelia**) also called a **mock sun** or a **phantom sun**, is an atmospheric phenomenon that creates bright spots of light in the sky, often on a luminous ring or halo on either side of the sun.



Super Moons



Sky Awe in the every day

Clouds



Sky Awe in the every day

Eclipses



Conclusion – Sky Awe

- Sky Awe is a feature of our relationship with the sky.
- Sky Awe is experienced when the observer engages with the vastness and or beauty of a sky and does so without curiosity, the person steps into sky awe.
- Sky Awe produces an experience of engaging with the sacred – something different and larger than the self.
- Sky Awe generates omens from comets to any form of sky divination
- Sky Awe produces spiritual experiences.
- Sky Awe creates mythology, and therefore it is culture making - cosmogenic.